

RECEIVED
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT USDC CLERK, CHARLESTON, SC
DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA
2006 FEB -1 P 3: 50

Clayton H. Tisdale, # 278610,
aka Clayton Howard Tisdale,

Plaintiff,

vs.

Jon Ozmint, Director of South Carolina Department of
Corrections; and
Anthony Padula, Warden of Lee Correctional
Institution,

Defendants.

) C/A No. 9:06-0276-GRA-GCK

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Report and Recommendation

Background of this Case

The plaintiff is an inmate at the Lee Correctional Institution of the South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC). He has submitted the above-captioned civil rights action¹ under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against the Director of the South Carolina Department of Corrections and the Warden of the Lee Correctional Institution.

¹In the spring of 2005, the Office of the Clerk of Court implemented a new system for listing case numbers. Under this new system, the two alphabetical suffixes at the end of the civil action number reflect the United States District Judge assignment and United States Magistrate Judge assignment.

Information on the South Carolina inmate database available on the LEXIS® service reveals that the plaintiff was convicted, in the Court of General Sessions for Horry County, of felony DUI (driving under the influence) resulting in death, and was sentenced to fifteen (15) years in prison:

*** THIS DATA IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY ***
SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
SOUTH CAROLINA INMATES

Name: TISDALE, CLAYTON HOWARD

* * *

***** SENTENCE INFORMATION *****

Inmate Number: 00278610
County of Conviction: HORRY
Location: LEE CORR INST
Offense: FELONY DUI-DEATH RESULTS
Sentence Length: 15 YEARS
Sentence Total: 15 YEARS
Sentence Begin Date: 9/28/2001
Parole Date: 6/19/2013
Sex Offender Registration Required: NO
Inmate Status: INCARCERATED

(South Carolina Inmate Database on LEXIS® service, downloaded on January 27, 2006).² Inmate information available on the South Carolina Department of

²In accordance with the Judicial Conference's new privacy policy, this quotation omits personal identifiers.

Corrections website (www.doc.sc.gov) indicates that the plaintiff's sentence "start" date is September of 2000.³

The "STATEMENT OF CLAIM" portion of the § 1983 complaint reveals that this civil rights action arises out of the plaintiff's requests for medical treatment at the Lee Correctional Institution on January 9, 2006, January 10, 2006, and January 21, 2006, and conditions at the Lee Correctional Institution. The conditions at Lee Correctional Institution include the water there. The plaintiff alleges that the water at the Lee Correctional Institution is blue. The plaintiff also alleges that he has a "RASH" all over his body. The plaintiff's answers on page 2 of the complaint reveal that the plaintiff has not filed a grievance about the medical care and the conditions at the Lee Correctional Institution, although there is a prison grievance procedure there.

In his prayer for relief, the plaintiff seeks various types of relief. Specifically, the plaintiff requests: **(1)** outside medical attention to evaluate the long-term effects of the water on the plaintiff's "system" because the plaintiff has a "RASH" all over his body; **(2)** blood work and a medical examination of the plaintiff's "skin tissues[;]" **(3)** examination by a skin specialist; **(4)** an order holding the SCDC responsible for all of the plaintiff's future medical expenses "dealing with this issue[;]" **(5)**

³The plaintiff obviously received a year of "jail time" credit on his sentence.

\$50,000.00 for Eighth Amendment violations and endangerment of the plaintiff's physical, mental, and emotional health; (6) \$25,000 for the future possibility of health problems; and (7) a fast and speedy trial on these matters.

Discussion

Under established local procedure in this judicial district, a careful review has been made of the *pro se* complaint pursuant to the procedural provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1915; 28 U.S.C. § 1915A; and the Prison Litigation Reform Act. The review has been conducted in light of the following precedents: Denton v. Hernandez, 504 U.S. 25, 118 L.Ed.2d 340, 112 S.Ct. 1728, 1992 U.S. LEXIS® 2689 (1992); Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 324-325, 1989 U.S. LEXIS® 2231 (1989); Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519 (1972); Nasim v. Warden, Maryland House of Correction, 64 F.3d 951, 1995 U.S.App. LEXIS® 26108 (4th Cir. 1995)(*en banc*), *cert. denied*, 516 U.S. 1177, 134 L.Ed.2d 219, 116 S.Ct. 1273, 1996 U.S. LEXIS® 1844 (1996); Todd v. Baskerville, 712 F.2d 70 (4th Cir. 1983); and Boyce v. Alizaduh, 595 F.2d 948 (4th Cir. 1979)(recognizing the district court's authority to conduct an initial screening of a *pro se* filing).⁴ *Pro se* complaints and petitions are

⁴Boyce has been held by some authorities to have been abrogated in part, on other (continued...)

held to a less stringent standard than those drafted by attorneys, Gordon v. Leeke, 574 F.2d 1147, 1151 (4th Cir.), *cert. denied*, Leeke v. Gordon, 439 U.S. 970 (1978), and a federal district court is charged with liberally construing a complaint or petition filed by a *pro se* litigant to allow the development of a potentially meritorious case. See Hughes v. Rowe, 449 U.S. 5, 9-10 & n. 7 (1980)(*per curiam*); and Cruz v. Beto, 405 U.S. 319 (1972). When a federal court is evaluating a *pro se* complaint or petition, the plaintiff's or petitioner's allegations are assumed to be true. Fine v. City of New York, 529 F.2d 70, 74 (2nd Cir. 1975). Even under this less stringent standard, the § 1983 complaint is subject to summary dismissal. The requirement of liberal construction does not mean that the court can ignore a clear failure in the pleading to allege facts which set forth a claim currently cognizable in a federal district court. Weller v. Department of Social Services, 901 F.2d 387, 1990 U.S.App. LEXIS® 6120 (4th Cir. 1990).

This case is subject to summary dismissal because the plaintiff's answers on page 2 of the complaint reveal that he did not file a grievance. See 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a), which was enacted as part of the Prison Litigation Reform Act; Porter

(...continued)

grounds, by Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319 (1989)(insofar as Neitzke establishes that a complaint that fails to state a claim, under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), does not by definition merit *sua sponte* dismissal under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i) [formerly 28 U.S.C. § 1915(d)], as "frivolous").

v. Nussle, 534 U.S. 516, 152 L.E.2d 12, 122 S.Ct. 983, 2002 U.S. LEXIS® 1373 (2002); Booth v. Churner, 531 U.S. 956, 149 L.Ed.2d 958, 121 S.Ct. 1819, 2001 U.S. LEXIS® 3982 (2001)(unanimous decision: PLRA requires administrative exhaustion even if grievance procedure does not allow monetary damages and prisoner seeks only monetary damages, so long as grievance tribunal has authority to take some responsive action); and Higginbottom v. Carter, 223 F.3d 1259, 2000 U.S.App. LEXIS® 21087 (11th Cir. 2000).

Although the lack of exhaustion of administrative remedies is generally considered an affirmative defense and not a jurisdictional infirmity in the Fourth Judicial Circuit, if the lack of exhaustion is apparent from the face of the prisoner's complaint or from additional facts requested by the court, *sua sponte* dismissal prior to service of the complaint is appropriate. See Anderson v. XYZ Correctional Health Services, 407 F.3d 674, 683, 2005 U.S.App. LEXIS® 8698 (4th Cir. 2005).

In orders filed on May 9, 1996, this court certified that the inmate grievance procedure established by the South Carolina Department of Corrections met the standards required by 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a)(2). See the orders filed in Misc. No. 3:96-MC-83-2 and Misc. No. 3:96-MC-84-2 (D.S.C., May 9, 1996). Furthermore, summary dismissal of the above-captioned case because of non-compliance with the Prison Litigation Reform Act will prevent the plaintiff from needlessly incurring

a nondischargeable debt of \$250 to the United States. See Kahn v. Malinov, 1996 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 7917, 1996 WESTLAW® 311447 (E.D.Pa., June 6, 1996):

Notwithstanding the fact that plaintiff has complied with this Court's Order of April 16, 1996, because his recent filing is not in accordance with the [Prison Litigation Reform] Act currently in effect[,] which governs the filing of Applications for Leave to Proceed *In Forma Pauperis*, his Motion for Leave to Proceed *In Forma Pauperis* will be denied without prejudice. In the event plaintiff decides to proceed in the case, he must comply with all provisions of the Act.

Kahn v. Malinov, 1996 WESTLAW® 311447, at *2. See also Smith v. Urban, 928 F. Supp. 532, 1996 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 8142 (E.D.Pa. 1996).

The plaintiff must file a Step 1 grievance at the Lee Correctional Institution. If there is a decision on his grievance and if the plaintiff is dissatisfied with the results of his Step 1 grievance, he can file an appeal. Such an appeal would be Step 2 of the SCDC grievance procedure.

Even if SCDC fails to respond to the plaintiff's Step 1 grievance and, as a result, leaves the plaintiff with no decision to appeal to Step 2, the plaintiff must still refrain from filing suit in federal court until all time periods for both steps to be completed have expired. Once the full period for prison responses has run without the issuance of any response, it is generally held that the inmate has substantially complied with the § 1997e exhaustion requirement. See, e.g., Boyd v. Corrections Corp. of America, 380 F.3d 989, 996, 2004 U.S.App. LEXIS® 18903 (6th Cir.

2004)(“Following the lead of the . . . other circuits that have considered this issue, we conclude that administrative remedies are exhausted when prison officials fail to timely respond to a properly filed grievance), *cert. denied*, 73 U.S.L.W. 3555, 161 L.Ed.2d 477, 125 S.Ct. 1639, 2005 U.S. LEXIS® 2458 (2005); Jernigan v. Stuchell, 304 F.3d 1030, 1032, 2002 U.S.App. LEXIS® 19144 (10th Cir. 2002)(“agree[ing with other circuits] that the failure to respond to a grievance within the time limits contained in the grievance policy renders an administrative remedy unavailable”); Lewis v. Washington, 300 F.3d 829, 833, 2002 U.S.App. LEXIS® 16388 (7th Cir. 2002)(stating that prison’s failure timely to respond renders administrative remedies unavailable); Foulk v. Charrier, 262 F.3d 687, 698, 2001 U.S.App. LEXIS® 18707 (8th Cir. 2001)(holding that defendants failed to prove non-exhaustion where they presented no evidence to refute plaintiff’s contention that he could not pursue grievance further after warden did not respond to his grievance); and Underwood v. Wilson, 151 F.3d 292, 295, 1998 U.S.App. LEXIS® 18884 (5th Cir. 1998)(holding that “available administrative remedies are exhausted when the time limits for the prison’s response set forth in the prison Grievance Procedures have expired”), *cert. denied*, 526 U.S. 1133, 1999 U.S. LEXIS® 3500 (1999). Under such circumstances, an inmate who files a Step 1 grievance but receives no response thereto must wait at least 110 days (approximately four (4) months) from the time

he or she files a Step 1 grievance before it may be said that he or she has exhausted "such administrative remedies as are available."⁵ 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a).

On page 2 of the complaint, the plaintiff's notation indicates that the above-captioned case is also a medical malpractice action. Negligent or incorrect medical treatment is not actionable under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Estelle v. Gamble, 429 U.S. 97 (1976). Negligence, in general, is not actionable under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. See Daniels v. Williams, 474 U.S. 327, 328-336 & n. 3 (1986); Davidson v. Cannon, 474 U.S. 344, 345-348 (1986); Ruefly v. Landon, 825 F.2d 792, 793-794 (4th Cir. 1987); and Pink v. Lester, 52 F.3d 73, 1995 U.S.App. LEXIS® 8912 (4th Cir. 1995)(applying Daniels v. Williams and Ruefly v. Landon: "The district court properly held that *Daniels* bars an action under § 1983 for negligent conduct[.]"). Secondly, 42 U.S.C. § 1983 does not impose liability for violations of duties of care arising under state law. DeShaney v. Winnebago County Department of Social Services, 489 U.S. 189, 200-203, 1989 U.S. LEXIS® 1039 (1989). Similarly, medical

⁵It appears that as long as the inmate waits the full 110 days established for the running of the entire process through Step 2, he or she may then file suit in federal court even though he or she has not formally completed Step 2. This is true because the SCDC policy states, in pertinent part, "[i]f, at the institutional level, the response to the grievance exceeds the established time limits, the grievance will automatically proceed to the next level of appeal." § 14(e) of the SCDC policy. See Boyd; Jernigan; Lewis; Foult; and Underwood. The 110-day period is determined by giving the maximum amount of time provided in the SCDC policy for each step in the process and assuming that no extensions of time are sought and the SCDC fails to timely respond to the Step 1 grievance within the forty-five (45) days allowed or fails to request a specific continuance of the established time to respond by SCDC officials at any point during the process.

malpractice is not actionable under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Estelle v. Gamble, *supra*, 429 U.S. at 106 ("Medical malpractice does not become a constitutional violation merely because the victim is a prisoner."). See also Brooks v. Celeste, 39 F.3d 125, 1994 U.S.App. LEXIS® 31180 (6th Cir. 1994)(Although several courts prior to the Supreme Court's decision in Farmer v. Brennan held that "repeated acts of negligence could by themselves constitute deliberate indifference, *Farmer* teaches otherwise.").

The plaintiff is not entitled to damages for mental stress or injury to his emotional health. Case law prior to the adoption of the Prison Litigation Reform Act had held that there is no federal constitutional right to be free from emotional distress, psychological stress, or mental anguish, and, hence, there is no liability under Section 1983 regarding such claims. See Grandstaff v. City of Borger, 767 F.2d 161 (5th Cir. 1985), *rehearing denied*, 779 F.2d 1129 (5th Cir. 1986), *cert. denied*, City of Borger v. Grandstaff, 480 U.S. 916 (1987); and Rodriguez v. Comas, 888 F.2d 899, 903, 1989 U.S.App. LEXIS® 15698 (1st Cir. 1989). See also the Prison Litigation Reform Act, which provides that physical injuries are a prerequisite for an award of damages for emotional distress under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. This provision is now codified at 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(e), and has been held to be constitutional. See Zehner v. Trigg, 952 F. Supp. 1318, 1997 U.S.Dist. LEXIS® 369


(S.D.Ind. 1997), *affirmed*, 133 F.3d 459, 463, 1997 U.S.App. LEXIS® 36776 (7th Cir. 1997)(“The restriction § 1997e(e) places on prisoners, therefore, is not even exclusive to them; [Metro-North Commuter R.R. v. Buckley, 521 U.S. 424, 1997 U.S. LEXIS® 3867 (1997)(Federal Employers’ Liability precludes recovery for emotional damages from exposure to asbestos in the absence of symptoms of asbestos-related disease)] authoritatively interprets an Act of Congress to impose the same restriction upon a large group of non-prisoners. This application to another group severely undercuts plaintiffs’ argument that § 1997e(e) denies them equal protection.”).

Recommendation

Accordingly, it is recommended that the District Court dismiss the above-captioned case *without prejudice* and without issuance and service of process. See Denton v. Hernandez, *supra*; Neitzke v. Williams, *supra*; Haines v. Kerner, *supra*; Brown v. Briscoe, 998 F.2d 201, 202-204 & n. *, 1993 U.S.App. LEXIS® 17715 (4th Cir. 1993), *replacing* unpublished opinion originally tabled at 993 F.2d 1535 (4th Cir. 1993); Boyce v. Alizaduh, *supra*; Todd v. Baskerville, *supra*, 712 F.2d at 74; 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)[essentially a redesignation of "old" 1915(d)]; and "new" 28

U.S.C. § 1915A[as soon as possible after docketing, district courts should review prisoner cases to determine whether they are subject to summary dismissal]. The plaintiff's attention is directed to the Notice on the next page.

Respectfully submitted,


George C. Kosko
United States Magistrate Judge

Charleston, South Carolina
~~January~~, 2006

Feb. 1

Notice of Right to File Objections to Magistrate Judge's "Report and Recommendation"
&

The *Serious Consequences* of a Failure to Do So

The plaintiff is hereby notified that any objections to the attached Report and Recommendation (or Order and Recommendation) must be filed within **ten (10) days** of the date of service. 28 U.S.C. § 636 and Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b). The time calculation of this ten-day period excludes weekends and holidays and provides for an additional three days for filing by mail. Fed. R. Civ. P. 6. A magistrate judge makes only a recommendation, and the authority to make a final determination in this case rests with the United States District Judge. See Mathews v. Weber, 423 U.S. 261, 270-271 (1976); and Estrada v. Witkowski, 816 F. Supp. 408, 410, 1993 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 3411 (D.S.C. 1993).

During the ten-day period for filing objections, **but not thereafter**, a party must file with the Clerk of Court specific, written objections to the Report and Recommendation, if he or she wishes the United States District Judge to consider any objections. **Any written objections must specifically identify the portions of the Report and Recommendation to which objections are made and the basis for such objections.** See Keeler v. Pea, 782 F. Supp. 42, 43-44, 1992 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 8250 (D.S.C. 1992); and Oliverson v. West Valley City, 875 F. Supp. 1465, 1467, 1995 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 776 (D.Utah 1995). Failure to file specific, written objections shall constitute a waiver of a party's right to further judicial review, including appellate review, if the recommendation is accepted by the United States District Judge. See United States v. Schronce, 727 F.2d 91, 94 & n. 4 (4th Cir.), *cert. denied*, Schronce v. United States, 467 U.S. 1208 (1984); and Wright v. Collins, 766 F.2d 841, 845-847 & nn. 1-3 (4th Cir. 1985). Moreover, if a party files specific objections to a portion of a magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation, but does not file specific objections to other portions of the Report and Recommendation, that party waives appellate review of the portions of the magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation to which he or she did not object. In other words, a party's failure to object to one issue in a magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation precludes that party from subsequently raising that issue on appeal, even if objections are filed on other issues. Howard v. Secretary of HHS, 932 F.2d 505, 508-509, 1991 U.S. App. LEXIS® 8487 (6th Cir. 1991). See also Praylow v. Martin, 761 F.2d 179, 180 n. 1 (4th Cir.) (party precluded from raising on appeal factual issue to which it did not object in the district court), *cert. denied*, 474 U.S. 1009 (1985). In Howard, *supra*, the Court stated that general, non-specific objections are *not* sufficient:

A general objection to the entirety of the [magistrate judge's] report has the same effects as would a failure to object. The district court's attention is not focused on any specific issues for review, thereby making the initial reference to the [magistrate judge] useless. *** This duplication of time and effort wastes judicial resources rather than saving them, and runs contrary to the purposes of the Magistrates Act. We would hardly countenance an appellant's brief simply objecting to the district court's determination without explaining the source of the error.

Accord Lockert v. Faulkner, 843 F.2d 1015, 1017-1019 (7th Cir. 1988), where the Court held that the appellant, who proceeded *pro se* in the district court, was barred from raising issues on appeal that he did not specifically raise in his objections to the district court:

Just as a complaint stating only 'I complain' states no claim, an objection stating only "I object" preserves no issue for review. *** A district judge should not have to guess what arguments an objecting party depends on when reviewing a [magistrate judge's] report.

See also Branch v. Martin, 886 F.2d 1043, 1046, 1989 U.S. App. LEXIS® 15,084 (8th Cir. 1989) ("no de novo review if objections are untimely or general"), which involved a *pro se* litigant; and Goney v. Clark, 749 F.2d 5, 6 n. 1 (3rd Cir. 1984) (*per curiam*) ("plaintiff's objections lacked the specificity necessary to trigger *de novo* review"). **This notice, hereby, apprises the plaintiff of the consequences of a failure to file specific, written objections.** See Wright v. Collins, *supra*; and Small v. Secretary of HHS, 892 F.2d 15, 16, 1989 U.S. App. LEXIS® 19,302 (2nd Cir. 1989). Filing by mail pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 5 may be accomplished by mailing objections addressed as follows:

Larry W. Propes, Clerk
 United States District Court
 Post Office Box 835
 Charleston, South Carolina 29402